615 Clan II: Ko:ve:ru (Ko:vu:r or Koyaru) and Belli septs;
614 Clan III: Barata and Maduve (otherwise Maituve or Mandu)
612 septs. This last clan, whose ancestors had come from the Ahgala
[793] monastery where they were *Jangama* priests, provides priests (Woderu) for most other Badagas.

Because the clans are not actually named, the confusing practice
615 has grown up of referring to them either by the names of villages where they are found or by the names of their constituent septs. Further identification of the clans is found in the unusual feature
(582) of their recognizing clan deities. As with the Lingayat Mallavas of Coorg (Srinivas, 1942, 36–37), Wodeas who worship the same god may not intermarry.

615 Wodea marriages are arranged between members of any two of
582 the three clans, even if between inhabitants of the same village; marriages also link those of the Nilgiris with those of Ha:sanu:ru.
177 Since the beginning of this century marriages have been contracted with Lingayat girls from the Wodea caste of Mysore who, unlike
615 Badaga girls, bring a dowry and are often well-educated: outsiders are thus increasingly entering the community. Some intermarriage with Kaggusis has occurred, and in a few cases Wodea girls have married Kanakkas.[9]

615 Wodeas, however, cite not only their supposed royal origins[10]
(186) but also the longer time they have lived in the Nilgiris as reasons for the near-absence of intermarriage between them and the other Lingayat clans. Initially, too, they were suspicious about whether these immigrants really were Lingayats; and furthermore the fact that people of these three clans may marry non-Lingayats is
(795) obviously not lost on the Wodeas. Locally they are considered a very conservative and orthodox Lingayat group, in the sense that they abide strictly by whatever prescriptions and proscriptions of
[212] the Lingayat creed are known to them. Lingayats of Mysore might regard them as rather unorthodox, though, for the Badagas were illiterate until this century and were thus unable to read Lingayat scriptures or even to follow the religious calendar properly (B.E.M.S., 1867, no. 28, 73). Apparently the Wodeas had established their position as a self-perpetuating phratry in the Nilgiris before the other Lingayats arrived.

In the past Wodeas did not accept food from Ha:ruvas or any socially inferior phratry but would eat in the inner room of any
● [252] other Wodea house (Grigg, 1880, 220). Their food may only be
(264) cooked in metal vessels, not earthenware. Other Badagas take

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mouth (e.g. black pepper) are considered cooling by Badagas. Furthermore milk is somewhat heating, whereas buttermilk is cooling. Especially curious is the case of the hill gooseberry, which is a cooling food but is treated as heating because "it has many small seeds inside which dry in the bowels and so cause constipation." The best subjective explanation that I have been able to provide for the Badaga categorization is that the heating foods may be more indigestible than others, and hence have a greater tendency to cause heartburn. This is not however what informants told me, and I hesitate to venture the idea.

Preparation of Food

2.2. Badaga cuisine has two aspects to it: one is the preparation of a meal, the second is the preservation of food for its future use.

While Badagas do not have ovens, they have a variety of cooking techniques. A large pot with a rack fitted inside can be used like an oven for baking. Frying, boiling and roasting are the other cooking techniques. (One simple example of a delicacy made from the leaves of cabbage or prince's feather is as follows. The leaves are cut up fine and boiled in water; the water is then drained off. Oil or clarified butter is heated in another pot with onion, mustard and chili. These are cooked until they smell good, then the boiled leaves are added.)

Boiled rice and, until very recently, several millets, form the staple of each Badaga meal. A meal is not considered complete without a curry, however, to be eaten with the rice or millet. This is a vegetable curry more often than not, since even the meat-eaters who make up the great majority of the Badaga population are not able to have meat at every meal. A Badaga proverb reminds us, "If there is no taste in the sauce, will there be taste in the [curry] pieces?" Milk makes the food richer: "If the milk [in cooking is too] much, will the food be spoiled?"—obviously not. Butter is not recommended, however, because it may attack the lungs with "cold" unless it is first clarified by heating.

Eggs, less commonly cooked than mutton, are boiled, fried, or made into omelettes. Some people now eat them raw. Fish is rarely cooked by Badagas, largely because they dislike the smell and are afraid of the bones. (A fish-bone is dislodged from the throat by swallowing balls of boiled rice.) Badagas like their meat hot and peppery

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252 when they are drinking liquor with the meal. Mutton, pork and chicken and the occasional game animals are either roasted or stewed in a curry. It is said that in the early days mutton was simply burned in the fire for a while, till it was dry.

[263] Salt is generally used in cooking. ("If the curry is saltless, you can add salt; but if the salt has lost its savour, what can you add?")

251 Badaga women also used to salt and dry surplus meat, frying it later when it was needed. The practice has now stopped because hunting has virtually ceased. Dried meat and other foodstuffs which last a long time are generally prepared for use in the rainy season. Tiger flesh, for example, should first be soaked in salty water, and then the pieces left on a roof to dry in the sun for 5-8 days. Tiger, pork, "ibex"

[539] and deer meat will spoil if not properly cured, but kept for too long; hence the proverb: "If [dried meat] is threaded and tied it will be spoilt as curry pieces; if it is burnt and eaten the stomach will be

[484] spoiled." In pre-British days when men occasionally had to go on long trading expeditions they took a foodstuff prepared from wheat flour, salt and crude sugar, which was cooked by steaming and would keep for months.

Meals

264 2.3. There are several proverbs that refer to eating, especially to
539 the undesirable effects of over-eating. It is believed a person cannot work well if he eats too often: "A woman who eats once a day will be healthy; a woman who eats twice a day is healthy; a woman eating thrice daily will be chronically sick." And again, "He who controls his eating will not become sick; he who can control his talk will have no fights;" or alternatively, "Too much talking will end up in a quarrel; too much eating will end in short breath" (Metz 1864: 93). Greed is expressed in the adage: "One person is saying there is not even salt for the evening; another is saying [he wants] sugar for the afternoon." Similarly, "When you can afford to wait till the food is prepared, you can't wait till it gets cool."

262 Finally we can cite a proverb referring to the use of wild plants and
539 to dietary differences between the rich and the poor: "If it is eaten by a wealthy man, it is for medicine; if eaten by a poor man, it is because he has nothing else for his stomach." It is felt one should work hard and eat well enough: "If there is mud on the hand, there is curd in the mouth."

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Badagas typically eat twice daily, once in the morning around eight o'clock and then again in the evening (Gaymard 1924: 3).[1] Each meal consists usually of two courses, the first being a curry, probably of vegetables, eaten with rice or millet. The second course, providing a third of the bulk of the meal, is curd or buttermilk. Usually with this latter course people eat a teaspoonful or so of hot lime relish, made with limes, chilies and salt. Despite the ground chilies it is "neutral" in its heating effect, and is said to dispel a disease characterized by dizziness, nausea and vomiting. At other times of the day Badagas "drink coffee, which because of the cold climate is a necessity for them and not a luxury" (Vivekanandam Pillai 1937: 247). The tedium of these meals is relieved by occasional sweets made from crude sugar, honey, or high-quality millets. Fruits are always appreciated too: "Who died by eating a jackfruit? Who expanded by eating a banana?"

The usual meal and its preparation have been described in these terms:

> The women pound regularly every day in their mortars of stone... a kind of millet, which forms the basis of the daily alimentation. The grain thus decorticated is boiled and served. They sit down on the floor...and...with the fingers of the right hand they crush these boiled grains and dip them in a sauce mostly composed of pepper, mustard and coriander; of this spiced mixture they make little balls of which they consume a number according to their appetite.
>
> Sometimes the housewives prepare cakes of cornflour boiled and mixed with honey and milk. Butter is used for seasoning (Tignous 1911: 116-17).

In most Badaga homes each Monday, the weekly holiday, and in the more well-to-do ones on both Mondays and Fridays, a woman should not cook ordinary green vegetables for the curry but make a richer meal, using beans and peas and, if non-vegetarian, some meat for the dish. A similarly rich dish should be prepared for a

[1]Readers who may be confused by my apparent use of an "ethnographic present" here and throughout the book should know that *if I put a statement in the present tense it is to the best of my knowledge currently valid, and if I follow it with a citation date, such as 1924, it was also noted at that time.*

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252 visiting affine, for otherwise he will conclude that he is not welcome
[574] in the house. One should eat with one's relatives: "If eaten with ten
people it is milk; if eaten by oneself it is shit." Several proverbs
252 suggest that not all affines are to be made welcome, though: "Is it
539 a bad thing for the affine who has become ruined and came [to us to
eat] a poor quality of finger millet and sour buttermilk?" The use-
less housewife is one who is too lazy to cook regularly: "Not caring
about her husband's hunger, a bad wife will eat the old food herself
[rather than cook]."

Earth-eating

261 2.4. The eating of earths is widespread in South India (Hooper and
Mann 1906: 254). We find that the practice has been reported in
particular from the part of Mysore whence the Badagas fled in the
sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and that a baked edible clay is
even sold in the bazaars there (Thurston 1901: 121; Hooper and
Mann 1906: 256). In that part of Mysore the consumption of raw or
baked clay was fairly common among women especially, and was
said to bring no ill effects. An informant did however state that
261 among chronic earth-eaters "their appearance suggests that they
164 are suffering from pernicious anaemia, the face being unnaturally
swollen or puffed and the abdomen distended, while the limbs are
shrunk except at the joints, which appear enlarged and are said to
be painful" (Thurston 1901: 121). Early medical officers reported
on the dire consequences of habitual earth-eating, especially men-
tioning anaemia and dysentery (Hooper and Mann 1906: 263-70).
[165] It has not been possible to discover whether the high death-rate due
to dysentery among Badagas (see 9.7) can be attributed in part to
this habit. Hooper and Mann (1906: 254) reported the practice as
261 widespread throughout India, and as chiefly confined to labourers
[171] and pregnant women, including Badagas. The practice is common
amongst them, pregnant women being especially fond of the earth,
even though older people abuse them for eating it because they do
not think it a foodstuff. The earth, said to have a pleasant taste and
smell, is yellowish-brown in colour, and is called *suttekal*. It is actual-
ly a weathered feldspar, chemically aluminium silicate, and is the
261 same thing as kaolin. Humans do of course need traces of aluminium
146 in their diet. Dietary deficiency where soils are heavily leached might
thus explain the practice; as it perhaps does the eating of charcoal